

null
Diana T Fritz 08/28/2006 04:29:40 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03244

SIPDIS
CXABU:

ACTION: AMB
INFO: USLO P/M POL PAO DAO DCM

DISSEMINATION: AMB
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MJSISON
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY
CLEARED: USLO:RSIMM, DAO:BKERINS

VZCZCADI459
OO RHMFISS RUEHC RUEHZM RUEHDM RUEHIL RUEHBUL
RUEHDE RHEHNSC RUEKJCS RUEASRT RHRMDAB RUEADWD RUEAHQA RUEKJCS
RHEFDIA RUENAAA RHMFISS RHMFISS RUEKJCS RUEAHQA RUENAAA RUEADWD
DE RUEHAD #3244/01 2060754
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 250754Z JUL 05
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0814
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0726
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1414
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0227
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 5255
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP/ISA/NESA//
RUEASRT/COMUSARCENT FT MCPHERSON GA
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASH DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ1/CCJ2//
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ3/CCJ4/CCJ5//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5//
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHDC//IA//
RUENAAA/NAVY IPO WASHINGTON DC
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DALO-SA//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 003244

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2015
TAGS: [MCAP](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [SA](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: GENERAL ABIZAID MEETING WITH ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE

REF: A. ABU DHABI 3161
[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 767
[1](#)C. ABU DHABI 3008

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: CENTCOM Commander General Abizaid met July 20 with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ). Abizaid praised the UAEG for its steadfast determination to wage a public campaign against extremist ideology and terrorism, citing the Friday sermons delivered across the country July 15 condemning terrorism (ref A). Abizaid and MbZ reviewed the security and political situation in Iraq. MbZ continues to believe that the Iraq Transitional Government is being influenced by Tehran. Abizaid said stability would come to Iraq eventually, but that the recent uptick in suicide bombings was an indication that the road

would be rough for the foreseeable future. Both Abizaïd and MbZ expressed concern about Syria's failure to prevent insurgents from entering Iraq via its territory. Noting that his brother, Information Minister Sheikh Abdullah, planned to travel to Damascus to meet with Syrian President Bashar Al Asad, MbZ offered to deliver "any message" the USG would like passed to the Syrian leadership. Abizaïd and MbZ also reviewed Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts. MbZ said the UAE would proceed with plans to build a causeway linking the UAE and Qatar despite Saudi objections. MbZ informed us that Bahrain had withdrawn its Special Forces contingent from Afghanistan (the Emiratis had trained the Bahrainis to fight alongside them in Afghanistan). End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On July 20, CENTCOM Commander General Abizaïd, accompanied by the Ambassador, CENTCOM J2 General Custer, the Commander's Executive Officer Col. Smith, USLO Chief, Defense Attache, and Pol Chief (notetaker) had lunch with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. MbZ was accompanied by his brother, Information Minister Sheikh Abdullah, UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Hamed Thani Al Rumaithy, Directorate of Military Intelligence Director Brigadier Essa Al Mazrouie, and MbZ's Director for International Affairs, Yousef Al Otaiba.

A PUBLIC STAND ON COMBATING EXTREMISM

¶3. (C) Abizaïd praised the UAE leadership for taking a strong public stand against extremism and terrorism. He noted the UAEG-approved sermon condemning terrorism delivered throughout the country on July 15 (ref A). "These are great words," he said. MbZ affirmed the UAE's "national strategy" to counter extremist ideology and combat terrorism. He emphasized that people needed guidance from their leaders; without direction, their minds could be manipulated by extremists. He said the lone dissenter to the July 15 sermon was a lawyer from the emirate of Fujairah who thought it was not appropriate for imams to deliver political speeches in mosques. Two days after the sermon, the lawyer apologized, MbZ said. MbZ emphasized his strong belief that Saudi Arabia should confront its extremist problem now rather than to "wait until it was too late." MbZ said he was willing to wager that if "fanatics" in Riyadh began to "blow themselves up," the Saudis would "scream like babies" to the U.S. to "come and help." The UAE has done its own housecleaning to rid itself of "Muslim Brotherhood" influence. "We used a Hoover (vacuum)," he said, laughing.

IRAQ

¶4. (C) MbZ and Abizaïd reviewed the security and political situation in Iraq. Abizaïd noted the recent increase in suicide bombings targeted at civilians. The insurgents had focused their deadly attention on Iraqi non-combatants) men, women and children. He was optimistic that the Iraqi forces being trained by the Coalition would eventually be able to ensure security that would pave the way for greater stability in Iraq. "There are more Iraqis fighting for Iraq alongside the Coalition than are fighting against Iraq as insurgents," he said.

¶5. (C) MbZ inquired about U.S. casualties in Iraq and said he shared Abizaïd's concerns about the present security situation. MbZ made clear that he continues to believe that the Iraqi Transitional Government was being influenced by Iran. MbZ also said he would continue to support - "with cash" - former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, adding that he hoped the U.S. would support Allawi as well.

¶6. (C) Abizaïd said it was important for the political and constitutional processes to advance in Iraq, and for Sunnis to continue participating in the political process. This would contribute to a lessening of violence. Ambassador urged MbZ and Sheikh Abdullah to continue publicly supporting the Iraqi political process, and asked about the UAE's

current efforts to engage the Iraqi Sunni population. MbZ said he did not have confidence in Iraq's Sunni leadership. Sheikh Abdullah noted that Sunni members of Iraq's constitutional drafting committee had withdrawn from the committee after fellow Sunni committee members had been killed on July 19.

OFFER TO CONVEY USG MESSAGE TO SYRIA'S BASHAR

17. (C) MbZ informed us that Sheikh Abdullah planned to travel to Damascus the week of July 25 to meet with President Bashar, and offered to have Abdullah deliver a message from the USG. Ambassador asked Abdullah when he had last met Bashar face to face; Abdullah replied that it had been two days before the Iraq conflict began. In a sidebar conversation, Ambassador shared with Abdullah the USG's view that Syria was expending minimal efforts to combat terrorism, and that Syrian territory continued to be used by those supporting Iraq's insurgency. As a neighbor of Iraq, Syria should be doing more to dismantle terrorist networks and end the use of its territory as a place where terrorists gathered and transited into Iraq. Ambassador noted Secretary Rice's public statement that the Syrians were frustrating the hopes of the Iraqi people by not acting decisively against these terrorists.

18. (C) MbZ and Abizaïd discussed Syria's role in maintaining security along its border with Iraq. Abizaïd estimated that approximately 100 insurgents were crossing the border into Iraq monthly, and expressed concern about the uptick in suicide bombings in Iraq. Abizaïd noted that the Syrians were "making themselves vulnerable to extremists." MbZ nodded in agreement and said that Bashar should "get the message very clearly" that Syria cannot continue to help the insurgency. DMI Director Brigadier Al Mazrouie told General Custer and DATT at the luncheon table that the Syrian military could close the border to insurgents, but that they could not sustain that for very long. Last February -- after General Abizaïd had described how extremists visit Saudi mosques, target young Saudis, whisk away the new recruits to Damascus, and send them into Iraq to carry out suicide bomber operations -- MbZ had directed DMI Director Al Mazrouie to send intelligence officers to Syria to learn more about foreign fighter recruiting -- ref B. Further information has yet to be developed. (Note: On July 24, Ambassador met with Sheikh Abdullah and raised USG concerns that a high-level visit to Syria might send the wrong signal to the SARG)-septel. She underscored again the need to make clear to the SARG that the flow of foreign fighters from Syria into Iraq needed to cease. Ambassador also underscored the need to end Syrian interference in internal Lebanese affairs and for the SARG to expel Palestinian rejectionist groups. End note.)
PAKISTAN

19. (C) During a smaller meeting after lunch, Abizaïd remarked that Pakistani President Musharraf had made vigorous efforts along the Pak-Afghan border to combat insurgents. Approximately 50 insurgents had been killed, 15 of whom were Arabs (MbZ requested a specific breakdown by nationality, noting that UAE's State Security Directorate might be able to "fill in gaps" in U.S. information.) MbZ said when he met President Musharraf in May in Lahore, he was "shocked" to observe that Musharraf did not appear fully in command of his facts. For example, Musharraf had not been aware that a network of several Pakistanis with terrorist links had been rounded up in UAE earlier this year. MbZ added that he had not been overly impressed by ISI's General Kiyani. Did Musharraf truly have full authority over all elements of the ISI, he wondered. UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hamad Thani said he would be in Islamabad August 3-5 on a counterpart visit. Abizaïd encouraged the UAE to keep up such political leadership and senior military contacts. MbZ and Ambassador also discussed Musharraf's choice as Pakistan's nomination of Ehsan Al Ullah Khan as new Ambassador to the UAE. Al Ullah, from Sharjah's Crescent Petroleum, is a school friend of Musharraf's who has lived in

Sharjah for some 20 years. MbZ said Al Ullah had been Iyad Allawi's secretary years ago and it was through Al Ullah that MbZ first met Iyad Allawi.

UAE-SAUDI TENSIONS

¶10. (C) MbZ said that despite Saudi objections, the UAE was not backing down from a planned UAE-Qatar causeway linking the two countries (ref C). "We are going ahead," he declared. MbZ said the UAE was "not in a hurry" to tackle its other major issue with Saudi Arabia, the Shaybah/Zarrarah oil field, 20 percent of which lies on the UAE side. MbZ opined that King Fahd was primarily concerned about the territorial issue (the causeway) while Crown Prince Abdullah was principally interested in the financial issue (seeing that the oil field remained fully under Saudi control.) MbZ extended an invitation to General Abizaid to view firsthand the UAE-Saudi border during his next visit to the UAE. (Note: Saudi Arabia claims that a plan by the UAE and Qatar to build a causeway violates the 1974 UAE/Saudi border treaty, whereby the UAE ceded to Saudi Arabia a 25km strip of land connecting the UAE and Qatar. The UAE claims that it only gave up the land, not the maritime waters, and it considers Saudi Arabia's objections to the causeway an effort by Saudi Arabia to prevent Gulf nations from deepening ties independent of the kingdom. Yousef Al Otaiba told Ambassador separately that the UAEG had developed a list of 27 options with which to respond to the Saudi pressure, ranging from international arbitration to military action. End note.)

BAHRAINI SPECIAL FORCES; QATAR F-16 ACQUISITION?

¶11. (C) MbZ asked that his 215-member Special Operations Contingent, assigned to Afghanistan on six-month tours, be moved to "tougher" areas to gain more exposure to action. MbZ also informed us that Bahrain had decided to withdraw its Special Forces from Afghanistan, although he did not explain why. Earlier this year, the UAE Special Forces had trained the Bahrainis to fight alongside them.

¶12. (C) During the smaller meeting, MbZ also inquired whether the U.S. would supply the Qataris with F-16 fighter aircraft. He said he was interested in knowing this because of Gulf Cooperation Council interoperability reasons. (Note: On July 24, Lockheed-Martin representatives told Ambassador and USLO Chief that the Qataris were in the preliminary stages of exploring the acquisition of F-16 Block 50 or Block 60 models. The Qatar Air Force was talking about the acquisition of approximately 30 aircraft. End note.) Gen. Abizaid also invited MbZ to visit Al Udeid Air Base in September, or to visit troops together in Afghanistan in the autumn.

UAE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

¶13. (C) Abizaid inquired about the UAE's protection of its critical infrastructure, such as its oil and water desalination facilities. MbZ acknowledged the potential threat to the installations.

COMMENT:

¶14. (C) MbZ's comments to General Abizaid were telling for several reasons. First, the UAE's July 15 sermon was clearly a key component of a new national strategy to influence the views of Emiratis * and the large expatriate Pakistani, Palestinian, Jordanian, Iraqi, Bangladeshi, and Afghan population) on the targeting of civilians in Iraq and terrorism in general. Second, MbZ's continuing discomfort and dismay at the ascendance of the Shi'a majority in Iraq remains strong (and his support for Iyad Allawi consistent). Third, as Sheikh Abdullah's interest in traveling to Damascus shows, the UAE seeks to remain a quiet player on the larger Middle East stage. Fourth, Abu Dhabi's ire over the

Saudi border issue remains strong. These themes are likely to be raised again during MinState Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed's visit to the United States in August.

¶15. (C) Finally, MbZ's decision to meet over lunch with General Abizaid and a support party of 17 U.S. armed forces personnel in uniform at a public restaurant adjacent to a posh waterfront hotel in Abu Dhabi illustrates his confidence in his country's) and his own) safety and security. While aware of potential terrorist threats, MbZ and the Emirati leadership are keen to project an image of the UAE as a safe place for investors and tourists. After lunch, MbZ made a point of going from table to table to shake hands with other diners. End Comment.

¶16. (U) General Abizaid has cleared this message.
SISON